

SECTION II

Our Lord Jesus Christ: His Ministry on Earth

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LESSON 8

The Wonder of His Words

I. **Text.** "Never man spake like this man" (John 7. 46). "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John 6. 63).

II. **Main Lesson.** The words spoken by the Lord Jesus were God's words. He received them from God. Therefore they were: *Gracious* (Luke 4. 22) and *With Authority* (Matt. 7. 29), and such as never man spake.

He claimed that they were not spoken from Himself, but both what He should say (the matter) and what He should speak (the words) were given Him of His Father.

They were therefore spirit and life to those who heard them believing.

III. Scriptures to Study.

Isaiah 50. 4: *The Lord of the Opened Ear.* "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning; He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned" (or instructed one—scholar).

John 8. 38: *Speaking what He saw.* "I speak that which I have seen with My Father: . . . why do ye not understand My words? Even because ye cannot hear My Word."

John 12. 47, 48: *The Responsibility of Hearing.* "If any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

vv. 49-50. *As the Father said unto Me, so I Speak.* "For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father saith unto Me, so I speak."

Matthew 7. 24-27. *The Parable of the Two Builders.*

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"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not: for it was founded on a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended . . . and it fell, and great was the fall thereof."

IV. Nine Things the Lord said about His Words:

1. **THEY ARE SPIRIT AND LIFE** (John 6. 63). They were the mediums He used to feed us upon His Body and Blood, to minister to us the Heavenly Manna, the Bread from Heaven.

2. **THEY ARE LIKE SEED** (Mark 4. 14). The Parable of the Sower tells us that the Son of man sows the Word. Seed has inherent life. So the Word of God brings life to the hearer. God has chosen the preaching of the Gospel as the means of saving men.

3. **THEY HAVE A CLEANSING POWER** (John 15. 3). "Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you."

4. **THEY ARE THE MEANS OF OUR SANCTIFICATION** (John 17. 17). "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth."

5. **THEY BRING US INTO LIBERTY** (John 8. 31-32). "If ye continue in My Words. . . . Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

6. **THEY BRING US ETERNAL LIFE** (John 5. 24). "He that heareth My Words, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life."

7. **THOSE WHO KEEP THEM NEVER SEE DEATH** (John 8. 51). "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My sayings, he shall never see death."

8. **THEY WILL NEVER PASS AWAY** (Matt. 24. 35). "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

9. **THEY WILL JUDGE THE SINNER AT LAST** (John 12. 48). "The Word that I have spoken the same shall judge him in the last day."

V. Other Lessons as to His Words.

1. **THEIR BREVITY.** All the recorded words of Christ could be printed in a 16-page pamphlet. His longest speech takes but fifteen minutes to read aloud.

Those words have wrought wonders in the world and revolutionized the lives of millions and brought new life, peace and rest to living and dying. Yet Rudolf Stier wrote eight volumes of 400 pages each on *The Words of the Lord Jesus* and thousands of volumes have been written by others on them. So few, yet so mighty are they.

2. **THEIR BEAUTY.** Judged as ordinary literature, these words are the most beautiful in the world. In this the Lord Jesus is pre-eminent also. None of the world's great writers can compare with Him. Who has ever written things to compare with "The Prodigal Son," "The Lost Sheep," "The Good Samaritan"?

One may search the world's libraries and have to say, "Never man spake like this man."

3. **THEIR PURITY AND EXCELLENT MORALITY.** The world has had many codes of morals. Philosophers and moralists have striven to reform men, but where is purity of such moral height as in the Sermon on the Mount? It stands out pre-eminent for simplicity, nobility and power.

4. **THEIR SYMPATHY.** Whoever spake so tenderly to the heart of sinful man as did Our Lord Jesus? Where can the gracious appeal of Matthew 11. 28 be matched: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"?

Sinners drew near to hear Him, for He said He had not come to condemn but to save, not to call the righteous but sinners.

5. **THEIR WONDER.** The strangest fact about the words of the Lord Jesus is that they centred round Himself. Yet none ever accused Him of egotism or pride.

He Himself was Salvation. Those who would find rest must come to Him.

The thirsty must come to Him and drink. Those who would have life must eat of Him.

He was the Great I AM. Would men be saved, "I am the Door." Would they come to the Father, "I am the Way," Would they walk in light, "I am the Light." Would they rise again, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

He was Himself God. "I and the Father are One." "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (see Lesson V).

6. **THEIR PROPHECIC VALUE.** He spake of things to come. Whole chapters are devoted to the future when He would come again for His own and later in power and great glory to take to Him His power and reign, and to execute judgment.

In all these He Himself is the Judge before Whom all nations would be gathered, and each soul give an account of himself.

Several parables speak of the future, as "The Ten Virgins," "The Wicked Husbandmen," "The Sheep and the Goats."

7. **THEIR DIGNITY.** In these words of our Lord is no confusion, no uncertainty, no hesitation, no mistake ever acknowledged, no "perhaps" or "I think" or "possibly," or other evidence of fallibility. Above all, no coarseness or vulgarity, no sentimentality, emotionalism, no sob-stuff, no mock heroics, no trifling or lightness. There is no "dead fly" in the ointment.

Application.

The Same is a Perfect Man, since He offended not in word (James 3. 2).

Let us rely wholly on His words.

Let us make them known to others.

Let us study them closely to learn of Him.

OUTLINE

The	{	Wisdom and Wonder Order and Originality Riches and Righteousness Dignity and Divinity Sympathy and Strength	}	of the Words of Christ
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LESSON 9

His Walk on Earth

I. Text. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk even as He walked" (1 John 2. 6).

II. Main Lesson. The Lord walked on earth upon the same principles as He would have us do. In this He was our perfect example.

His manner of life was simple, sincere and godly. We may learn of Him and walk after the same method, practising the same things and relying upon the same resources. As He is so are we in this world.

III. Scriptures to Study.

Luke 14. 25: *Great Multitudes follow Christ.* "And there went great multitudes with Him: and He turned and said unto them":

v. 26. *Conditions of Discipleship.* "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."

v. 27. *Crossbearing.* "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."

vv. 28-30. *Counting the Cost—A Builder.* "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he hath sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

v. 31. *Going to War—A King.* "Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is a great way off he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace."

v. 33. *The True Disciple.* "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple."

IV. **How did the Lord Jesus walk?** What were the principles upon which He acted?

1. **HIS AIM IN LIFE.** He tells us Himself: "I do always those things that please the Father." The will of God was the end and aim of His whole life: from boyhood when He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" to the last agony in the Garden when He cried, "Not My will but Thine be done." In this we may walk as He walked. "Ye know how ye ought to walk and to please God."

2. **HIS PRINCIPLE OF LIFE.** He lived and walked by faith, as He would have us do. "As I live by the Father, so He that eateth Me shall live by Me."

Walking in the path of dependence and obedience, He could of Himself do nothing. His words and works were from the Father; as He was instructed so He acted. He was the Beginner and Finisher of faith.

3. **HIS POWER IN LIFE** was the Holy Spirit, as it should be ours.

He was conceived of the Holy Ghost; anointed by the Spirit; led by the Spirit to be tempted; came up in the power of the Spirit to His ministry; by the Spirit cast out demons; and by the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, and in the energy of that same Spirit was raised from the dead.

That Spirit is given to all believers, that they too may live by, walk in, and be led by the Holy Spirit.

4. **HIS AUTHORITY AND GUIDE IN LIFE** was always the Holy Scriptures. He ever appealed to them and quoted them: "What saith the Scriptures?" "How readest thou?" "What is written in the Law?"

When tempted He overcame the Devil with a thrice repeated "It is written."

In this we may "walk as He walked."

5. **HIS PRACTICE OF PRAYER.** He Himself tells us men ought always to pray and not to faint. "And being found in fashion as a man," He prayed.

Seven times in Luke we read of Him praying. He spoke three parables on prayer: "The Pharisee and the Publican," "The Friend at Midnight," and "The Importunate Widow"

and Unjust Judge." He agonized in prayer in the Garden. He died praying.

Let us then pray without ceasing, for we may walk as He walked.

6. HIS JOY IN LIFE. Although as to His circumstances He was the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, yet He had a joy always before His eyes.

In this He was as the Apostle—"cast down, yet always rejoicing."

But we never find Him rejoicing in anything but the Will of God.

"I delight to do Thy will" was His true confession. When He rejoiced in spirit over the truth being revealed to babes, it was because "it seemed good in Thy sight."

His joy was in saving sinners; in bringing many sons to glory.

So may we "rejoice in the Lord" though all is dark around, with the joy of faith that sees the unseen and looks beyond the present and temporal to the eternal.

7. HIS SORROWS IN LIFE were because of the dishonour sin had brought into the world. "Rivers of water run down Mine eyes because they keep not Thy law."

He wept three times:

Once over the guilty city of Jerusalem.

Once at the grave of Lazarus.

Once in the garden of Gethsemane.

His griefs were not personal but for the miseries of sinners and the judgment on the guilty.

8. HIS OCCUPATION IN LIFE. It is summed up in the words, "Who went about doing good." Let it be ours. "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men." "To do good and communicate forget not." Not to those who please us only, but to good or bad, friend or enemy alike, as God sends His rain upon the just and unjust.

V. Other Lessons from the Study.

1. TRUE DISCIPLESHIP is to put oneself under the teaching and discipline of Christ. This will demand wholehearted yielding of ourselves and all we have to be at His disposal.

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If anything is held back or something kept dark, the lessons He would teach us will be spoiled.

But if all is yielded then we may learn of Him to walk as He walked.

2. HOLINESS IS IN WALKING AS HE WALKED. A holy life is a Christ-like life. As we look upon Him as He walked so we become like Him. As we behold His glory in the Gospel mirror we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

It is to have the mind of Christ within and the walk of Christ without.

To be like Christ is the only way to be holy.

3. SUCH A WALK IS DESCRIBED as "Walking in Christ," "Walking in the Spirit," "Walking in the Truth," "Walking in the Light" and "Walking in Love," for so the Lord walked, and we should walk as He walked.

VI. Application.

Study His holy walk more.

Seek to follow His footsteps.

Sanctify Him as Lord in the heart that He may teach us how to walk.

How to Walk

In {
Wisdom (Col. 4. 5).
Ancient paths (Jer. 6. 16).
Light (1 John 1. 7).
Kindness and Love (Eph. 5. 2).

In {
LIGHT (1 John 1. 7).
LIBERTY (Psa. 119. 45).
LOVE (Eph. 5. 2).
LAW OF GOD (Neh. 10. 29).

LESSON 10

His Wondrous Works

I. Text. "The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me" (John 10. 25).

II. Main Lesson. The miracles and signs that Jesus did attested His claim to be the Son of God with power. Not alone, for others have wrought miracles, but in conjunction with the other evidences.

The nature of His miracles was such as to reveal both His grace and power. They were never magical displays, nor done for show, but *beneficent works* and *parables in action* teaching profound lessons.

III. Scriptures to Study.

(i) Matthew 8. 16: *Foretold in Scripture.* "When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Isa. 53. 4).

(ii) Matthew 11. 2-6: *John the Baptist satisfied.* "Now when John heard in prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto Him, Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me."

(iii) Acts 10. 38: *Peter's Testimony in the Home of Cornelius.* "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him."

(iv) John 14. 11: *Our Lord's Own Appeal*. "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake."

IV. The Character of Our Lord's Miracles.

1. THE LORD DID NOT PURPOSE TO BANISH SICKNESS, DISEASE, TYRANNY AND DEATH AT HIS FIRST COMING.

Although He refused none who came to Him, yet He did not proclaim *universal* healing or liberty to all captives; nor resurrection of *all* the dead.

For example:

He went to the Pool of Bethesda, where was a "multitude of impotent folk, blind, halt and withered," but the Lord healed only one.

When He stood by the grave of Lazarus He called, "Lazarus, come forth," but left the rest of the dead in their graves.

He came to set the prisoner free, yet He left His own cousin after the flesh to languish and die a cruel death in Herod's dungeon.

The reason is threefold:

(a) *The redemption of the body* is not yet; we still wait for it. See Rom. 8. 23.

(b) *The day of millennial blessing* and righteous government is not yet. Tyrants still hold their cruel sway.

(c) *The day when those in their graves* shall come forth is not yet. See John 5. 28-29.

These—sickness, tyranny, and death—are still permitted of God, and are overruled to serve His purpose. The wrath of man is made to praise Him; the remainder is restrained (Psa. 76. 10).

2. HIS MIRACLES BORE NO RESEMBLANCE TO THE LYING WONDERS OF ROME, which are often grotesque displays of magical tricks, as liquefying blood, nodding and winking madonnas, and such-like follies.

Nor are the uncertain, indefinite, and unreliable cures of neurotic cases so much in evidence today anything like the miracles of our Lord. They differ in these points:

(a) He cured *all* who came.

(b) He cured them *instantly*.

- (c) He cured them *perfectly*.
- (d) He cured them *permanently*.
- (e) He cured them *without charge*.

3. HIS WONDROUS WORKS HAD A THREEFOLD VALUE:

- (a) They were "signs" attesting His claim to be the Messiah,
- (b) They were *acts of compassion and deeds of benevolence*, and *- Revealing His compassion*
- (c) They were *enacted parables*, each of them having some spiritual lesson to teach.

They were examples in the physical realm of what He came to do in the spiritual realm, and of what one day He will do universally when He comes to put things right on this troubled earth.

4. YET WE MAY MAKE KNOWN OUR REQUESTS IN PRAYER subject to His will, and He will always answer as shall be most to His glory and for our blessing.

That some saints are called to lifelong suffering is a well-known and undeniable fact. To suggest that they are not in the will of God, or are lacking in faith, is ignorant and wanton cruelty.

That many are raised up in answer to prayer is also beyond all question.

Let those who suffer continue in the prayer of faith, and accept joyfully the answer He gives them, whether it be relief or recovery or the ministry of patient suffering.

V. Some Other Lessons from the Study.

1. THE MOTIVE FOR THE MIGHTY WORKS was always for the Glory of God.

Never (a) *for His own advantage*. In this He sought not His but always the good of others. He could have called for more than twelve legions of angels to deliver Him, but would not (Matt. 26. 53).

(b) *Never in revenge or judgment* on His enemies. He had not come to judge the world, and moreover He loved His enemies and prayed for them (Luke 23. 34).

(c) *Never to make a display or show*. When Satan invited Him to do this by casting Himself down from the

pinnacle of the Temple, He refused to tempt the Lord His God.

(d) *Never to satisfy curiosity*, as when Herod hoped to see a miracle wrought by Him He refused.

(e) *Not expecting them to convert His enemies*. They strengthened the faith of His disciples, and they left the opposers without excuse, only adding to their guilt in rejecting His claim. They were just additional appeals to those willing to hear.

(f) They were done "*that the works of God should be made manifest*" (John 9. 3). So the Lord said when they asked why the man had been born blind. They were evidence of God's interest in man's happiness.

(g) They were "*for the Glory of God.*" The Lord said when Lazarus died (John 11. 4), "*that the Son of man might be glorified thereby.*" That is that His true character might be known—His compassion, love and power.

(h) They were *that we might believe*, as when the blind man whose eyes had been opened said: "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" So the mighty works are given as a confirmation and ground of our faith (John 10. 25 and 14. 11).

2. THE BEAUTY AND GRACE OF THE MIGHTY WORKS. They were the result of *the Divine Compassion* (Matt. 15. 32), as when He fed the fainting multitude, as when He raised the widow's son (Luke 7. 13), as when He touched the eyes of the blind (Matt. 20. 34). In each case we read "He had compassion" (see Mark 1. 41, 6. 34).

They were *Good and Beneficent Actions*. Lepers cleansed, sick healed, demons cast out, the blind made to see, the lame to walk, the dead raised. No fanciful or spectacular show marred their simplicity and tenderness.

3. "GREATER WORKS SHALL YE DO." This promise has no doubt reference to the fact that the Lord's miracles were wrought in the physical realm, but those who are filled with the Spirit effect greater works than those because by their ministry the spiritually dead are raised to eternal life; the morally lame are made to walk in newness

of life; the defiled with the leprosy of sin made "clean every whit" in the sight of a holy God.

The spiritual is greater than the natural.

VI. Application.

Let us ponder the mighty works and learn of the Lord's ways and wisdom.

Let us seek His power that we may do greater works than these.

Let us blaze His Name abroad as the great Miracle-worker.

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OUTLINES

Seven Various Works

Work of Sin in our members (Rom. 7. 5).

Work of the Law (Rom. 2. 15).

Work of God (John 6. 29).

Work of Christ (Phil. 2. 30).

Work in the Lord (1 Cor. 9. 1).

Work of Faith with Power (2 Thess. 1. 11).

Work and Labour of Love (Heb. 6. 10).

Kinds of Works

Wicked works (Col. 1. 21). Good works (1 Tim. 6. 18).

Dead works (Heb. 6. 1). Abiding work (1 Cor. 3. 14).

Deceitful works (Dan. 11. 23). Faith works (Jas. 2. 18).

Devilish works (1 John 3. 8). Love works (1 Cor. 13. 7).

A Simple Outline

Get Good—Be Good—Do Good.

LESSON 11

His Parables as Self-Revelations

I. Text. “*Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?*” (Matt. 13. 10).

II. Main Lesson. The reply the Lord gave to the above question revealed:

(a) *That truth is a privilege* for those who are willing to obey it only (Matt. 13. 11). “Unto you (disciples) it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them (the careless) it is not given.” Parables hide it from the latter and disclose it to the former.

(b) *That the Parables were Self-revelations*, many of them representing Christ to us in different aspects of His office and work. By studying them we shall get to know Him better (Matt. 13. 16-17).

III. Scripture to Study (Matt. 13. 10-17).

v. 10. *The Disciples Ask why He Spoke in Parables.* “The disciples came and said unto Him, Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?”

v. 11. *The Answer—Truth is for the Disciple Only.* “He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.”

v. 12. *The True Learner and the Willing Heart ever gains more.* “For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.”

v. 13. *There are those Blind and Deaf who will not See or Hear.* “Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.”

v. 14. *This was as Foretold in Scripture.* “In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive.”

v. 15. *Such had Closed their Eyes and Ears lest they should be Converted.* "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

v. 16. *The Blessedness of Opened Hearts.* "But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."

v. 17. *The Appearance of Christ had been longed for by many Prophets and Righteous Men.* "For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

IV. Reasons for Speaking in Parables.

1. THE MYSTERY OF ELECTION. "My sheep (those given to the Lord by the Father) hear My voice" (John 10. 27); others did not hear "because ye are not of My sheep" (John 10. 26).

We are never in the Scriptures far away from the truth of Sovereign Grace—

"Why was I made to hear His voice
And enter while there's room?"

Because it pleased God—"to you it is given" (v. 11).

2. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN TO HEAR. All down the ages the prophets have cried, "Hear ye the word of the Lord." This truth is the complement of the former. All who have ears to hear are invited, entreated, and, indeed, commanded and warned to hear. To refuse is to incur guilt.

3. YET THE MYSTERY IS ONLY FOR THOSE WHO HEAR. It is a "state secret" that none may know but those to whom the Lord is pleased to reveal it. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. It is often revealed to babes, but hidden from the wise and prudent.

Pride cannot wrest it from God; the wisdom of the wise is but foolishness without it.

4. **TO THE REBEL IT IS REFUSED.** "It is wise and reasonable to draw a veil, which, however, is willingly removed whenever any faithful one wishes to join himself more nearly to the King" (Stier).

Pearls are not cast before swine. The condition is plainly stated by the Lord in John 7. 17: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine."

5. **TRUTH WONDERFULLY BALANCED.** God's truth is so balanced that it forces no man, but leaves every man without excuse.

Parables are truths so wrapped up that they meet the need of the willing hearer and pass unknown and unvalued over the mind of the unwilling.

"A Parable is like the pillar of cloud and fire which turned the dark side to the Egyptians, the bright side to the people of the Covenant; it is like a shell which keeps the precious kernel as well *for* the diligent as *from* the indolent" (von Gerlach).

V. Characters Assumed by the Lord in His Parables.

1. **A SOWER** (Matt. 13. 3). This is the first and the outstanding parable, for Jesus said, "Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?"

It discloses the way in which the Lord intended to do His great Salvation work in the world. It was as a sower sowing seed. In other words, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

The Lord was the Great Sower of the Seed of the Word. A variation of the same figure is in Matthew 13. 24, where the Sower sows "the children of the Kingdom."

2. **A SHEPHERD** (Matt. 18. 12 and Luke 15. 4). A figure used of the Lord all through the Bible. The Good Shepherd Who gave His life for the sheep and sought the lost sheep until He found it. The Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

3. **A MERCHANT MAN** (Matt. 13. 45), seeking goodly pearls Who, when He had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that He had and bought it. "Ye are bought with a price."

4. A KING'S SON (Matt. 22. 2), for whom the king made a marriage.

5. A BRIDEGROOM (Matt. 25. 1), expected soon to come for His bride—the Church.

6. AN HOUSEHOLDER (Matt. 20. 1), Who hired labourers to work in His vineyard.

The GOODMAN OF THE HOUSE (20. 11), who gave to the last even as to the first.

7. A MAN TRAVELLING INTO A FAR COUNTRY (Matt. 25. 14), leaving His servants to trade for Him and coming again to reward them (see also Mark 13. 34).

8. A NOBLEMAN GOING INTO A FAR COUNTRY TO RECEIVE A KINGDOM (Luke 19. 12), and leaving His servants to occupy till He came again.

9. A CREDITOR who mercifully and frankly forgave His debtors (Luke 7. 41-42), and similarly,

10. A KING, taking account of His servants (Matt. 18. 23), Who compassionately forgave His debtor ten thousand talents, who proved to be an unmerciful and pitiless servant.

11. A GOOD SAMARITAN who rescued the man who had fallen among thieves and cared for him.

12. A LORD RETURNING FROM A WEDDING (Luke 12. 36), Who expected His servants to be watching and ready for His coming.

13. A CERTAIN MAN WHO MADE A GREAT SUPPER (Luke 14. 16), and bade many who excused themselves, and then bade His servants go out into the highways and hedges and compel others to come in.

14. THE "BELOVED SON" of the certain man who planted a vineyard (Luke 20. 9) and let it out to wicked husbandmen, who said, "This is the Heir: come, let us kill Him."

15. THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH (Matt. 25. 31), coming as the Son of Man in His glory to judge all nations, separating the sheep and the goats.

What a grand variety of figures of our Lord these make !

What a profitable study for those who love to know Him better !

He has graciously revealed Himself to us thus in many different characters.

VI. Other Lessons from the Parables.

1. THE LORD'S PARABLES AS EXAMPLES. Those who have spiritual discernment will find this visible world full of parables of the invisible.

This old creation is a porch to and parable of the new creation. It has many wonderful lessons to teach us. St. Bernard wrote to an old Archbishop of York (1091-1153): "Believe one who has had experience; you will find something more in woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you what you cannot learn from masters." This thought Shakespeare long afterwards embodied in the well-known words,

"And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Let us have open eyes and teachable hearts.

2. TRUTH HIDDEN. Nothing worth while is ever either done or gained without trouble. God has nothing for the idle and slothful, therefore He hides Himself (Isa. 45. 15). "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour."

Yet He is ever found of them that seek Him with the whole heart.

Truth also is Hidden. It is called "the hidden wisdom" (1 Cor. 2. 7), and "the hidden riches of secret places" (Isa. 45. 3).

Truth is worth seeking for, and to those who are in earnest, even though babes, it is revealed (Matt. 11. 25).

3. THE BEAUTY OF PARABLES. There is no form of truth that is so delightful to listen to as the parable. When once the secret is gained it lives for ever unforgotten in the memory.

A parable is like a lovely picture on the wall—a joy for

ever. It is like a window overlooking a wide view, or like music played by a skilful hand.

For the parables we thank our gracious Lord, especially for those that form life-like portraits of Himself.

VII. Application.

Pray for opened eyes and discerning hearts to see the hidden wisdom. Study diligently to discover the full meaning of the parables.

Pass on the good things you discover to others.

OUTLINES

Five Figures of Our Lord

The SON, as in the Parable of the Vineyard.

The SEEKER, as in the Parable of the Lost Sheep.

The SOWER, as in the Parable of the Sower.

The SHEPHERD, as in John 10.

The SAMARITAN, as in the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

Eight Hidden Things

Hidden things of darkness (1 Cor. 4. 5).

Hidden things of dishonesty (2 Cor. 4. 2).

Hidden man of the heart (1 Pet. 3. 4).

Thy hidden ones (Psa. 83. 3).

A man hidden (Prov. 28. 12).

Hidden riches of secret places (Isa. 45. 3).

Hidden wisdom (1 Cor. 2. 7).

Hidden manna (Rev. 2. 17).

LESSON 12

The Lord's Promises

I. Text. "For all the promises of God in Christ are Yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1. 20).

II. Main Lesson. The great and precious promises of God in Christ are given to us that by them we may be partakers of the Divine nature (2 Pet. 1. 4).

Promises formed a great part of the ministry of Christ. They are such as no mere man could have made. They therefore evidence His deity and substantiate His claim to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

In Him is the "Yea"—that is, the affirmation—and in Him is the "Amen," the confirmation. He promises, assures, and fulfils them.

His people are every day proving the truth of them and becoming by them partakers of the new nature, the eternal life, the life more abundant, the life that is life indeed.

III. Some of the Outstanding Promises of Christ.

1. THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

John 3. 16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (See also John 3. 36, 5. 24, 6. 47 and 58, etc.)

John 10. 28: "I give unto (My sheep) eternal life; and they shall never perish."

2. THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

John 14. 16: "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever."

John 16. 7: "If I depart, I will send (the Comforter) unto you."

John 16. 13: "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." (See also John 14. 26, 15. 26, 16. 8-14; and Luke 12. 12.)

3. LIVING WATER.

John 4. 10: "If thou knewest the gift of God . . . thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

v. 14: "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

John 7. 38: "He that believeth on Me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

4. SALVATION.

John 10. 9: "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

Matthew 24. 13: "He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved."

John 6. 37: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out . . . this is the Father's will, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing."

5. NEVER DIE.

John 8. 51: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death."

John 11. 25: "I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

6. ANSWER TO PRAYER.

Matthew 7. 7: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh receiveth."

Matthew 21. 22: "All things, whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

(See also Matt. 6. 33; Luke 12. 31; Mark 11. 23; Luke 18. 8; John 14. 13.)

7. REWARD FOR CONFESSION AND SERVICE.

Matthew 10. 32: "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in Heaven."

Matthew 19. 29: "Everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

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Matthew 10. 42: "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

(See also Matt. 24. 45-47; Luke 14. 14; Mark 9. 37, 10. 29; John 4. 36 and 12. 26.)

8. HIS PRESENCE WITH US.

Matthew 18. 20: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

Matthew 28. 20: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Hebrews 13. 5: "For He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

9. HE WILL COME AGAIN.

John 14. 3: "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

(See also Matt. 25. 19 and 44; Luke 20. 30; Rev. 21. 7, 12 and 20.)

IV. Other Lessons from the Study.

1. THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS. "Died in faith, not having received the promises (that is, of the coming of Messiah), but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them."

Let us be fully persuaded that God is able to perform what He has promised. Let us "embrace" them—that is, lay them to heart and rejoice in them.

Abraham believed God, being fully persuaded of this (Rom. 4. 20-21).

Faith rests on and rejoices in the promises.

2. HOW TO INHERIT THE PROMISES. It is "by faith and patience" (Heb. 6. 12). Faith that depends on the faithfulness of the Promiser and patience that can wait His time and is not discouraged by delay.

It is, therefore, by faith that we "obtain promises" (Heb. 11. 33)—that is, make them our own—now in anticipation, and in God's time in realization.

3. THE PURIFYING EFFECT OF THE PROMISES. "Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves

from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord " (2 Cor. 7. 1).

" Every man that hath this hope (of the Lord's return) set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure " (1 John 3. 3).

One who expects soon to see the Lord is not likely to go about with soiled garments, but will seek to keep himself unspotted so as to be found of Him in peace with loins girded and lamp trimmed.

V. Application.

1. Let us remember the promises are made by Him that cannot lie.
2. Let us not fail of them through unbelief.

OUTLINES

The Promises Include

Pardon (Heb. 10. 17), Power (Acts 1. 8), Presence (Matt. 18. 20).
 Resurrection (John 14. 19).
 Overcoming (John 16. 33).
 Mercy (Luke 1. 72).
 Indwelling Spirit (John 14. 17).
 Salvation (Rom. 1. 2).
 Eternal Life (Titus 1. 2).
 Sanctification (John 17. 17).

NEVER in John's Gospel

Never Thirst (4. 14), never Hunger (6. 35), never See Death (8. 51), never Perish (10. 28), never Die (11. 26).

LESSON 13

The Personal Talks of the Lord Jesus

I. **Texts.** "He talked with the woman" (John 4. 27).
"He talked with us by the way" (Luke 24. 32).

II. **Main Lesson.** The art of personal dealing with seekers is one that every soul-winner must learn.

If the servant of God is to be a successful fisher of men, he must know how to catch men with guile.

The best way to learn is to ponder the individual talks that our Lord had in His ministry on earth. From them we shall learn how the great Master Soul-Winner went to work.

It is the object of this lesson to show this.

The variety and beauty of these talks is wonderful, but there are underlying them some first principles common to them all, that we shall do well to observe and emulate.

III. **Scripture to Study.** John 3. 3-16: *The Talk with Nicodemus.*

v. 3. *The Lord Answers Nicodemus, that he must be Born Again.* "Jesus answered and said, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

v. 4. *Nicodemus Asks how a Man can be Twice Born.* "Nicodemus saith, How can a man be born when he is old?"

vv. 5-7. *Jesus Explains that it is a Spiritual Rebirth.* "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

v. 8. *By the Operation of the Spirit like the Wind.* "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

v. 9. *Nicodemus Again Asks How it Can Be.* "Nicodemus answered and said to Him, How can these things be?"

v. 14. *The Lord Explains by Reference to Moses Lifting up the Serpent—Life came by a Look.* "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

IV. Personal Talks of the Lord Jesus.

1. **NICODEMUS** (John 3. 3-16), as above. A talk about the New Birth and how it could be.

2. **THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA** (John 4. 7-26). A talk about satisfying water and spiritual worship.

3. **THE RICH YOUNG RULER** (Matt. 19. 16-26; Luke 18. 18-30). A talk on eternal life, and how it may be had; who can be saved, and the danger of riches.

4. **THE LAWYER** (Luke 10. 25-37). A talk on inheriting eternal life; the use of the Law; and as to who is my neighbour.

5. **THE SCRIBE** (Matt. 22. 34-40 and Mark 12. 28). A talk to one "not far from the Kingdom," on the great commandments.

6. **THE CANAANITE WOMAN** (Matt. 15. 21-28; Mark 7. 24-30). A talk with a Gentile who would claim the mercies of David; the faith that would not be denied.

7. **THE PHARISEE** who asked Him to dine (Luke 7. 40-47). A talk on the love of a forgiven sinner.

8. **MARTHA** (Luke 10. 38-42). A talk on being cumbered with much serving; the one thing needful; and the better part.

9. **THE BLIND MAN** (John 9. 35-38). A talk with one He had healed, on faith in the Son of God.

10. **MARY AND MARTHA** at the grave of Lazarus (John 11. 21-27, 32-40). A talk about resurrection and revelation of Himself as the Resurrection and the Life.

11. **PETER**, after His resurrection (John 21. 15-25). A talk with a backslider, resulting in his restoration.

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12. THOMAS, after His resurrection (John 20. 26-29). A talk with a doubter, on the wisdom of faith without seeing.

13. MARY MAGDALENE, after His resurrection (John 20. 11-18). A talk about the ascension.

14. CLEOPAS AND ANOTHER on the walk to Emmaus (Luke 24. 13-31). A talk on the value of the Scriptures.

V. Other Lessons on Our Lord's Personal Talks.

1. PERSONAL AND INDIVIDUAL INTEREST IN MEN. The Lord was not a mere preacher, a doctor of law, a theologian, but a lover of the souls of men, with an individual interest in each case.

Even opponents He loved and answered graciously and patiently, "in meekness instructing those who opposed themselves," as Paul bade Timothy do (2 Tim. 2. 25).

This leads each of us to regard Him as the Lover of *MY* soul; to say "The Son of God loved *ME* and gave Himself for *ME*."

2. HIS MANNER OF DEALING WITH SEEKERS.

(a) *The first thing was always to show them their LOST condition as sinners.*

As the Apostle afterwards taught, "*that every mouth may be stopped*" (Rom. 3. 19).

So the Lord silenced each in turn, so that they stood before Him guilty sinners with nothing to say.

It was so with Nicodemus. "Ye must be born again." So Nicodemus stood dumbfounded and helpless before his Lord. He could not create himself anew. His mouth was stopped.

It was so with the Woman of Samaria. "Go, call thy husband," and in a moment her mouth was stopped and she stood a convicted sinner before her Lord. without excuse, without escape.

It was so with the Rich Young Ruler. "Go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor," and in a moment his covetous heart was exposed to himself, and he saw that his supposed keeping of the Law from his youth up was folly—he stood there a self-condemned idolater—his god his money.

It was so with the Lawyer. He would endeavour to justify himself, but when shown what a true neighbour was and bidden go and do likewise he must have known it was hopeless. He stood an exposed and self-condemned lawbreaker.

Man must know and take his true place as a guilty sinner before God, ere he can be saved.

(b) Then the Lord revealed Himself as the Object of Faith.

To Nicodemus as the Son of Man who, like the serpent in the wilderness, must be lifted up, that eternal life might be given to all who believed.

To the Woman of Samaria. "I that speak unto thee am He"—the Messiah that was to come.

To the Rich Young Ruler. "Come, and follow Me."

To the Lawyer. He sketched the true neighbour, the Good Samaritan, an evident portrait of Himself.

To the Blind Man. "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that speaketh with thee"—the Son of God.

(c) He Grounded all He said on the Scriptures. For faith must rest on the Word of God.

He referred the Rich Young Ruler, the Lawyer and the scribe to the Commandments—not as the way of life but as the Law of God, which gave the knowledge of sin and the holy requirements of God.

On the way to Emmaus He began at Moses and all the prophets, and in all the Scriptures He expounded unto them the things concerning Himself.

(d) He Rewarded Faith, often saying, "Thy faith hath saved thee, Go in peace"; requiring first a real repentance, without which all must perish.

Let the one who seeks to deal with enquirers study these points, that he may be an effective worker.

3. HIS GRACIOUS ANSWERS TO THE DIFFICULTIES that trouble the minds of men. He was a Greater than Solomon. The Queen of Sheba had all her hard questions answered by him, but our Greater than he satisfies our hearts' enquiries more perfectly.

The Gentile Sinner got some of the crumbs from the Master's table when she took the place of a little dog.

Martha was lovingly warned against serving too much, one dish was sufficient, and Mary had chosen a better part, to sit at His feet and listen.

And she and Mary had their doubts as to resurrection resolved by learning that He is the Resurrection and the Life.

Peter learned that love could cover a multitude of sins, swearing and disloyalty among them, and only asked for love in return.

Thomas was advised to believe, and not insist on physical demonstration.

Mary Magdalene was assured of her Lord's physical resurrection, but was bidden not to detain Him with displays of natural emotion.

Cleopas and his Companion were taught to have more confidence in the Word of God.

So each in turn were instructed, rebuked and comforted according to their respective needs.

There is no case too difficult for our Solomon.

VI. Application.

Let the *Sinner* take his true place before the Lord and find in Him a real Saviour.

Let the *Believer* bring all his doubts and difficulties to the Greater than Solomon.

Let the *Worker* learn the holy art of personal dealing.

THE LIPS

Wise Words from the Book of Proverbs

- The Lips of the Righteous feed many (10. 21).
- The Lips of the Righteous know what is acceptable (10. 32).
- The Lips of the wise shall preserve them (14. 3).
- The Lips of the wise disperse knowledge (15. 7).
- Righteous Lips are the delight of kings (16. 13).
- The Sweetness of the Lips increaseth learning (16. 21).
- The Lips of Knowledge are a precious jewel (20. 15).
- For the Grace of his Lips the king shall be his friend (22. 11).
- Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer (24. 26).

LESSON 14

Our Lord's Illustrations

I. Text. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matt. 6. 28).

II. Main Lesson. The Lord was the Master of the Art of Illustration. In this, as in all else, He takes the pre-eminence over all others in the world's literature. His purpose was to show that the Earth is, if rightly understood, a Parable of Heaven; things seen and temporal, a shadow of things unseen and eternal. In this He set the example to His servants; let them in their ministry see that they let light into the minds of their hearers by apt illustration.

The Lord took His illustrations from three sources:

- (i) *The Scriptures*, enforcing His points by the histories and wise sayings of the Old Testament;
- (ii) *Nature* and the common objects all around us; and
- (iii) *Real Life* wrought into Parables or recorded as facts

III. Scriptures to Study : Matthew 6. 24-30.

v. 24. *Serving Two Masters.* "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

v. 25. *The Life more than Meat and the Body than Dress* "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

v. 26. *Behold the Birds, how they Live.* "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

v. 27. *Who can Add to his Height?* "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?"

vv. 28, 29. *Look at the Way the Lilies are Clad.* "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

v. 30. "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

Matthew 12. 5, 8, 40-42.

v. 5. *A Greater than the Temple.* "The priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the Temple."

v. 8. *Son of Man Lord of the Sabbath.* "For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

vv. 40-41. *Jonah, a Type of the Greater than Jonas.* "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh . . . repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."

v. 42. *The Queen of the South and Solomon.* "The Queen of the South shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

IV. Our Lord's Illustrations from Scripture.

(i) *The Death of Abel* (Matt. 23. 35), as showing the evil of the natural heart and the guilt of the nation.

(ii) *The Flood* (Luke 17. 26), as a warning of a more terrible judgment to come.

(iii) *The Destruction of Sodom* (Luke 17. 29): a warning of the sudden retribution to fall on the wicked.

(iv) *The Fate of Lot's Wife* (Luke 17. 32): an example of the folly of looking backwards.

(v) *Abraham* rejoicing to see the day of Christ (John 8. 56), Who before Abraham was could say, "I am."

(vi) *Moses and the Burning Bush*, when the Lord said, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"—used as a proof of resurrection.

(vii) *Moses' Writings* (John 5. 46). Had they believed Moses they would have believed Him; for Moses wrote of Him.

(viii) *Moses' Law Given* (John 7. 19). "Did not Moses give you the Law, yet none of you keepeth it?"

(ix) *The Rite of Circumcision* (John 7. 22): first given to Abraham and enforced by Moses in the Law.

(x) *The Law as to Brother's Wife* (Luke 20. 28), from which the Lord taught that in Heaven they do not marry.

(xi) *The Manna in the Wilderness* (John 6. 31): the Lord teaching that He was the True Bread from Heaven.

(xii) *The Serpent Lifted up in the Wilderness* (John 3. 14-15), which the Lord used as a type of His own death.

(xiii) *David Eating the Shewbread* (Matt. 12. 3-4), which it was only lawful for the priests to eat.

(xiv) *Solomon in all his Glory* (Matt. 6. 28): not clothed so gloriously as a lily of the field.

(xv) *The Queen of Sheba's Visit to Solomon* (Matt. 12. 42): would condemn those who refused the greater than Solomon.

(xvi) *Elijah and the Woman of Sarepta* (Luke 4. 26): a Gentile blessed while the elect people were passed by.

(xvii) *Elisha's Cleansing of Naaman* (Luke 4. 27), enforcing the same lesson.

(xviii) *The Murder of Zacharias* (Luke 11. 51) the priest, the son of the good Jehoiada (2 Chron. 24. 21), an example of the apostasy of Israel.

(xix) *Jonah* (Matt. 12. 40-41), a sign to the nation, and illustration of Christ in His death and resurrection.

V. Our Lord's Illustrations from Nature.

These are so many that space forbids to do more than make a selection.

The following are used as illustrations in the *Sermon on the Mount* alone, as given in Matthew 5-7; they serve to show the Lord's wonderful versatility and the extensive use He made of natural objects as teaching us spiritual lessons.

Salt (5. 13); light (5. 14); candle (5. 15); city set on a hill (5. 14); hand, foot, and eye (5. 29-30); Heaven and earth (5. 34-35); hair (5. 36); cheek (5. 39); cloke and coat

(5. 40); sun and rain (5. 45); moth and rust (6. 19); thieves (6. 20); the eye as the window of the body (6. 22); birds (6. 26); lilies (6. 28); mote and beam (7. 5); bread, stone, fish, and scorpion or serpent (7. 9-10); wolves (7. 15); grapes, thorns, figs and thistles (7. 16); good and bad trees, and fruit (7. 17-20); rock and sand (7. 25); wind, rain, flood and storm (7. 25 and 27).

Truly a wonderful fund of illustrations from Nature in a single sermon.

Is it any wonder they hung on His words and the common people heard Him gladly?

VI. Our Lord's Illustrations from Real Life.

The Parables are in almost every case illustrations of this kind.

The Sower who went forth to Sow (Matt. 13. 2).

The Enemy Sowing Tares (Matt. 13. 24).

The Finding of a Treasure in a Field (Matt. 13. 44).

A Merchant Seeking Goodly Pearls (Matt. 13. 45).

Fishermen Casting a Drag Net (Matt. 13. 47).

Woman Putting Leaven in Meal (Matt. 13. 33).

Two Builders Building each a House (Matt. 7. 24).

The Shepherd Seeking the Lost Sheep (Matt. 18. 12).

The Woman Seeking Lost Silver (Luke 15. 8).

The Prodigal Son (Luke 15. 11).

The Two Debtors (Luke 7. 41).

The Unmerciful Servant (Matt. 18. 23).

Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20. 1).

Marriage of the King's Son (Matt. 22. 2).

Ten Virgins at a Wedding (Matt. 25. 1).

And so on through almost the whole series of Parables

VII. Other Lessons from Illustrations.

1. OUR LORD'S REVERENCE FOR THE SCRIPTURES. In choosing illustrations from them He gave them His Divine Authority. He never questioned the truth of their histories, nor that they were inspired of God.

The wonder of the Bible is that it is exhaustive. There is no truth, moral, ethical, social, or spiritual, that is not contained in it. No new truth has ever been discovered

or added to the Scriptures, and nothing has been discredited.

2. OUR LORD'S LOVE OF NATURE. I suppose our text is the most beautiful and perfect sentence in the world (Matt. 6. 28): the lovely imagery of the lily, the striking contrast with Solomon in all his glory, is profoundly grand. We may safely challenge any student of literature in the world to produce a better one.

Each natural object is a thought of Christ's put into being. As Creator He thought the lily, and gave it its clothing, and bade it be, and it was.

Can we wonder that He took delight in all the lovely creations of His own mind?

3. THE NATURAL AND THE SPIRITUAL. Every natural object has a spiritual lesson to teach us, had we eyes to see it. Indeed, the things seen are made and intended to be parables of the unseen.

The first creation (physical) is a manifestation on the plane of natural vision of the character and blessings of the new creation (spiritual). The spiritual mind will find delight in observing these, and every "bush will be aflame with God."

4. OUR LORD'S DELIGHT IN THE SONS OF MEN. Everything affecting man's life interested the Lord, and from the ordinary affairs of human existence the Lord drew His illustrations. He sympathized with all and saw in all wonderful examples of heavenly things.

From Eternity His delights were with the sons of men, and when on earth everything that affected them—joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments—all found an echo in His heart and a lesson from His lips.

5. OUR EXAMPLE. The Lord chose and made up His own illustrations. Let us also seek to do so.

If speakers would take more trouble to seek out acceptable words and pleasant similes, there would not be such dry sermons and drowsy listeners. The more heavenly-minded a man is, the more of Heaven he will see on earth.

A pudding is less heavy for having some plums in it.

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A house is better furnished that has pictures on the walls.

A bride does not forget her ornaments; let not the servant of God neglect his.

VIII. Application :

Keep your eyes open.

Keep a spiritual mind and find the lessons in what is all around.

Serve up good food, but see that it has a pleasant taste.

OUTLINES

Things to Behold

Behold { The Lamb of God (John 1. 29).
The Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5. 5).
The Love of the Father (1 John 3. 1).
The Lord cometh (Jude 14).

Seven Things to Behold in Revelation

Behold { "I am alive for evermore" (1. 18).
"I have set before thee an open door" (3. 8).
"I come quickly; hold fast" (3. 11).
"I stand at the door and knock" (3. 20).
"The tabernacle of God is with men" (21. 3).
"I make all things new" (21. 5).
"I come quickly and My reward is with Me
(22. 7 and 12).